

VPL BOARD
Governance Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 11, 2022

Minutes of the VPL Board Governance Committee Regular Meeting held at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 via video call.

Present: Kurt Heinrich
Kevin Lowe – Chair
Raji Mangat
Karen Spears

Absent: Zahra Hussein

Management

Present: Christina de Castell – Chief Librarian & CEO

Recording

Secretary: Chrysalyn Tolentino – Executive Assistant

Board Chair Lowe acknowledged that our meeting takes place on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. He is grateful that we are able to convene the meeting and operate this amazing institution in their lands.

ADMINISTRATION:

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Kurt Heinrich

THAT the Committee approve the Governance Committee meeting agenda as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Minutes

The Chief Librarian & CEO presented the draft minutes of the meeting held October 20, 2021 for approval by the Committee.

Moved by Raji Mangat

THAT the draft minutes of the meeting held October 20, 2021 be approved as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & PROCEDURES

1. Terms of Reference

The Chief Librarian & CEO noted that the Terms of Reference are presented annually for review to remind Trustees of the roles and responsibilities of the Committee and as an opportunity to consider revisions or clarifications.

Moved by Kurt Heinrich

THAT the Committee receive the Terms of Reference for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Director Staffing Update - Verbal

Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell shared that she has appointed Maryn Ashdown to the role of Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services replacing Julie Iannacone who is retiring. Julie's last day at VPL will be on June 23. Jennifer Lee will be replacing Maryn as Associate Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell also commented on recruitment challenges in Canadian libraries. Vice Chair Heinrich asked how VPL is addressing issues around recruitment. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell responded that VPL is identifying future leaders internally and working with other libraries on leadership programs.

One example is LLEAD (Library Leaders Excellence and Development), developed by InterLINK for staff aspiring towards management roles. VPL usually sends two staff members to this program, and participates in instruction and mentorship. We also participate in and send staff to the CULC Public Library Leaders (PLL) program, geared towards seasoned library managers who have the potential for senior levels of leadership in public libraries.

Vice Chair Mangat noted that the cost of living in Vancouver is high, and asked if VPL salaries are comparable with other local libraries. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell responded that local libraries have very similar salaries but VPL jobs are generally considered more complex. The City has agreed to undertake a review of VPL compensation at the director level in the coming months.

Vice Chair Mangat congratulated Maryn Ashdown for her promotion and inquired about retirement recognition for Julie Iannacone. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell responded that we will plan this for the June Library Board meeting. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee agreed to refer the recruitment discussion to a future SFHR Committee meeting.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT & RECRUITMENT

3. Board Development and Continuing Education

Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that each year the Board reviews the training plan and results from the self-evaluation survey. A few trustees provided ideas for training, such as risk analysis and mitigation, advocacy and gender inclusion training. Trustee Spears sought clarification about Truth and Reconciliation training. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell responded that there are choices for Truth and Reconciliation, including through BCLTA, which was delivered by Indigenous Corporate Training, the University of Alberta MOOC, and a City of Vancouver course. Vice Chairs Mangat and Heinrich expressed interest in training on risk analysis and mitigation for libraries. Vice Chair Heinrich suggested we seek ways to offer training that can be optional, given capacity of trustees. Board Chair Lowe noted that trustees have discussed that staff perspectives on what training the Board needs could be helpful.

Board Chair Lowe suggested that given limited capacity, the best option for training is often the 30 minutes before the start of the Board meeting, and that longer training for complex topics could happen two to three times per year. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted the number of BCLTA training sessions, and that trustees appear to have capacity for one intensive VPL-specific training session per year in addition to BCLTA training, and that she expects VPL staff could deliver training before Board meetings at least three to four times per year. She added that staff will start working with the City on risk management in the fall of this year, and we would likely get most value by offering this training in early 2023, once that work has started. She asked trustees whether there was more interest in general risk analysis or library-specific. She will consider a framework for a pre-meeting discussion this year, and will check with BCLTA for suggestions. Board Chair Lowe noted that staff reports are in themselves training materials for trustees, and reflected on how, for example, an information report could explain gender inclusion and application of gender inclusion in the library, and that these reports are tools that the Board can use within meetings without requiring that trustees attend additional external training.

Moved by Karen Spears

THAT the Committee receive the report for information.

Trustees noted that it would be beneficial if the report is reviewed by the full Board, and amended the motion.

Moved by Kurt Heinrich

THAT the Committee recommend that the Board receive the report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Board Recruitment 2023

Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that last year, the Committee considered whether the matrix approach should be revised, and expressed interest in increasing Indigenous representation on the Board, and that the Governance Committee may wish to strike a small committee to look at recruitment processes and the matrix. She noted that staff have promoted opportunities to the local Nations on three occasions in the past year, and learned about ways the process could be more culturally appropriate, such as giving the opportunity to suggest others for the role rather than requiring people to nominate themselves. She also noted that the Nations have identified that a two week notice period is too short, and if VPL is seeking trustees, we will need to promote this to the local Nations with more notice. She also observed that there are challenges, since it is Council who appoints trustees, so it would be advisable to discuss VPL's priorities and approach with the Council Nominations Committee Chair. She noted the challenges of this being an election year, and that no trustee is reaching the 8 year term limit. She noted that typically in years where all trustees are re-applying, recruitment efforts have been minimized.

Vice Chair Heinrich noted risks related to expectations in the recruitment process, and commented on the need to also consider urban Indigenous community members. Trustee Spears supported the idea of adapting the nomination process so that it is more culturally appropriate. Vice Chair Heinrich inquired about the process for the Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver School Board representatives. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that the Library Act stipulates a maximum of 13 trustees on a Board, including one from City Council. She advised that the Vancouver Park Board and School Board liaisons are community appointees in terms of the Library Act and are not required roles; this has been a practice for many years. Board Chair Lowe expressed his opinion that if the local Nations do put forward names, the Board should consider these names in preference to re-appointments, given our priorities on Reconciliation and implementing UNDRIP will require that we make fundamental shifts in governance.

Vice Chair Mangat agreed that trustees should form a small group to discuss recruitment further. Vice Chair Heinrich noted that in the past, VPL used to prioritize appointing a writer as a trustee, and should also consider what expertise is required for the work of the next few years. The Committee agreed to further discuss Board recruitment at the next Governance Committee meeting.

ADJOURN

Moved by Karen Spears

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Kevin Lowe, Chair

Christina de Castell, Secretary

DRAFT